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Brasilia, Brazil

January 6, 1972

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The Honorable Charles A. Meyer
Assistant Secretary for
Inter-American Affairs
Department of State
Washington, D.C.

Dear Charlie:

You will recall the discussion which I had in Washington with you, John Crimmins and Bob Dean concerning the report [redacted] of the unorthodox approach made to American businessmen in São Paulo on behalf of General Humberto for contributions in support of Brazilian security forces, and my reply [redacted]

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I have now learned from Bob Corrigan that my views, as set forth in the telegram from Washington, were conveyed to the American business leaders whose attitude was, in effect, "Thanks for the advice. It is well understood and will receive due consideration." At the same time they made clear that they considered themselves too far down the road to back off and felt this would seriously prejudice their relationships with the Federation of Industries, not to mention possible adverse effects in ruling GOB circles. Two or three of the leaders stressed that they were never approached for assistance by the General, but only by the Federation of Industries, and it was therefore to the latter that they were responding. (Although they of course know the purpose for which assistance had been solicited, they seem to feel this "cut-out" provides some security.)

Romanach and others said that they appreciated my position and realized that it was correct, but stressed that "unorthodox and sometimes strange means of doing things are not uncommon in Brazil". They obviously are more inclined to use their own judgment in a matter of this sort than to act upon advice of U.S. Government representatives.

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The present situation thus represents a fait accompli. The only positive aspect is that by airing and discussing the matter with us and receiving our advice they might be more prudent with respect to any such request in the future. In any event I see no practical alternative at present to letting the matter stand as it is, although I will during my next visit to São Paulo seek an opportunity to discuss the matter with one or two of the leaders.

I am sure you will pass this along to John and Steve Low, as well as to others who have been informed of this highly restricted matter.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely,

William M. Rountree

AMB:WMRountree:rj

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